

*Bill Represents First Step in Drawing Additional Tourism, Federal Resources and Jobs to the Region*

*Washington, DC* - The U.S. House of Representatives today approved a bill authored by Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) that would authorize the National Park Service (NPS) to conduct a study on whether the Hudson River Valley should become a unit of the National Park system. As part of the National Park system, the region would see an influx of tourism, additional federal resources and increased preservation efforts that would create jobs and grow the local economy.

"Today the House recognized the historical and natural significance of the Hudson River Valley by calling on the National Park Service to conduct a study to determine if the region would be a good fit with the National Park system," Hinchey said. "I am optimistic that this bill will soon pass the Senate and be signed into law by the president, allowing the area to gain proper national recognition that would make it more attractive to visitors and businesses. This is a momentous day for those of us who live in the Hudson River Valley and one that I believe will eventually lead to a National Park designation for the region."

The vote to pass Hinchey's bill, H.R. 4003 -- the Hudson River Valley Special Resource Study Act, follows a successful vote in committee on February 24. A hearing was held on January 21 by the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands.

In order for the Hudson River Valley to become part of the National Park System, a congressionally-authorized NPS study must be conducted. Hinchey's legislation would authorize such a study from Fort Edward in Washington County down through Westchester County. If the NPS's study finds that the Hudson River Valley would be a good fit as part of the National Park System then subsequent legislation would be needed to make that designation. Hinchey said he would immediately introduce the necessary legislation.

Hinchey's bill outlines specific guidelines to ensure that the NPS study recognizes the realities of the Hudson River Valley. These guidelines require the NPS to closely examine park unit models, in particular national river and recreation areas, as well as other landscape protection models, that: encompass large areas of non-federal lands within their designated boundaries; foster public and private collaborative arrangements for achieving NPS objectives, and protect

and respect the rights of private land owners. No forced land acquisition activities would be permitted.

Hinchey has long sought greater recognition, protection, and resources for the Hudson River Valley. As a member of the New York State Assembly, Hinchey authored the legislation that led to the creation of the Hudson River Valley Greenway. In Congress, he authored legislation that led to the designation of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, which provides technical assistance to local communities or local managers to assist them in managing natural and historic sites of national importance.